

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 8741

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CI, PINT, ELAB

SUBJECT: PRO-GOVERNMENT LABOR LEADERS MEET WITH PINOCHET

REFS: (A) SANTIAGO 8665 (B) SANTIAGO 3044

1. SUMMARY: IN APPARENT REACTION TO PUBLICITY GIVEN RECENT DISCUSSIONS OF MAJOR REPRESENTATIVE LABOR LEADERS WITH MIN INTERIOR, GROUP OF PRO-JUNTA LABOR FIGURES HELD WELL PUBLICIZED MEETING WITH PRESIDENT PINOCHET DECEMBER 30. APPARENT PURPOSE WAS TO BOLSTER PRESIGE OF PRO-JUNTA GROUP, COUNTERACT SOME OF IMPRESSIONS LEFT BY MEETING OF MAJOR LABOR CRITICS OF GOC WITH MIN INTERIOR, AND GIVE SOME IMPULSE TO GOC'S STILL-BORN MOVEMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY (MUN). END SUMMARY.

2. PRESIDENT PINOCHET MET DECEMBER 30 WITH 16 LEADERS OF VARIOUS LABOR ORGANIZATIONS, ALL GENERALLY RECOGNIZED AS PRO-JUNTA WITH LITTLE INFLUENCE OR LABOR BACKING. ALL ARE MEMBERS OF GOC-FOUNDED AND SPONSORED MUN (OR UNA IN SOME REFERENCES) AND MEETING WAS HELD AT REQUEST OF MUN GROUP.

3. SPOKESMEN FOR GROUP REPORTEDLY DECLARED THAT THEY HAD FORMED LABOR FROUNT OF MUN TO SUPPORT GOC POLICIES. PRINCIPAL PUBLICITY WAS GIVEN TO RUBEN DIAZ, IDENTIFIED AS MEMBER OF COORDINATING COMMITTEE OF MUN. PINOCHET WAS QUOTED AS WELCOMING PRESENTATION BY GROUP, PROMISING TO STUDY PROPOSALS PRESENTED

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TO HIM (NOT FURTHER DEFINED), AND THINKING THEM AS UNCONDITIONAL

SUPPORTERS ("ADICTOS") OF JUNTA.

4. LEADING CONSERVATIVE PAPER "EL MERCURIO" AND GOC'S "EL CRONISTA" GAVE MAJOR ATTENTION TO STORY.

5. COMMENT: WE BELIEVE CALL ON PINOCHET BY MUN LABOR REPRESENTATIVES WAS PRINCIPALLY INTENDED TO COUNTER PUBLICITY GIVEN TO MID-DECEMBER MEETING OF MAJOR LABOR LEADERS -- WELL KNOWN INDEPENDENTS AND CRITICS OF MANY OF JUNTA'S POLICIES -- WITH MIN INTERIOR BENAVIDES (REFTEL A). JUNTA'S SUPPORTERS IN LABOR FIELD HAVE LITTLE INFLUENCE OR RESPECT AMONG MASSES OF ORGANIZED LABOR. OBVIOUS DEFERENCE PAID TO MORE REPRESENTATIVE LABOR LEADERS BY CONCESSION OF MEETING WITH BENAVIDES PROBABLY HAD TO BE COUNTERED BY MEETING WITH GOC'S OWN LABOR SUPPORTERS IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN LATTERS' STANDING. AS NOTED ABOVE, MEETING WAS REQUESTED BY MUN GROUP, NOT BY PINOCHET.

6. HEAVY EMPHASIS ON MUN, WHICH HAS NOT BEEN SIGNIFICANT SINCE ITS BIRTH IN APRIL 1975 (REFTEL B), IS PRESUMABLY RESPONSE TO STRONG ATTACK UPON IT BY RAFAEL CUMSILLE, IMPORTANT AND SYMBOLIC LEADER OF SMALL MERCHANTS, WHO ACCOMPANIED REPRESENTATIVE LABOR LEADERS IN MEETING WITH BENAVIDES. GOC HAS HAD MANY RESERVATIONS ABOUT, AND DIVIDED OPINIONS OVER MUN. WE SUSPECT PRESENT EFFORT TO BOLSTER IT IS SIMPLY DESIGNED TO KEEP IT ALIVE. ANNOUNCEMENT OF FORMATION OF MUN "LABOR FRONT" HAS LITTLE MEANING UNLESS GOC POLICY ON FORMATION OF A NATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION OR ON RELATIONS WITH LEGITIMATE LABOR MOVEMENT CHANGES DRASTICALLY, AND WE SEE LITTLE INDICATION SUCH A CHANGE IS BEING PLANNED.
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